

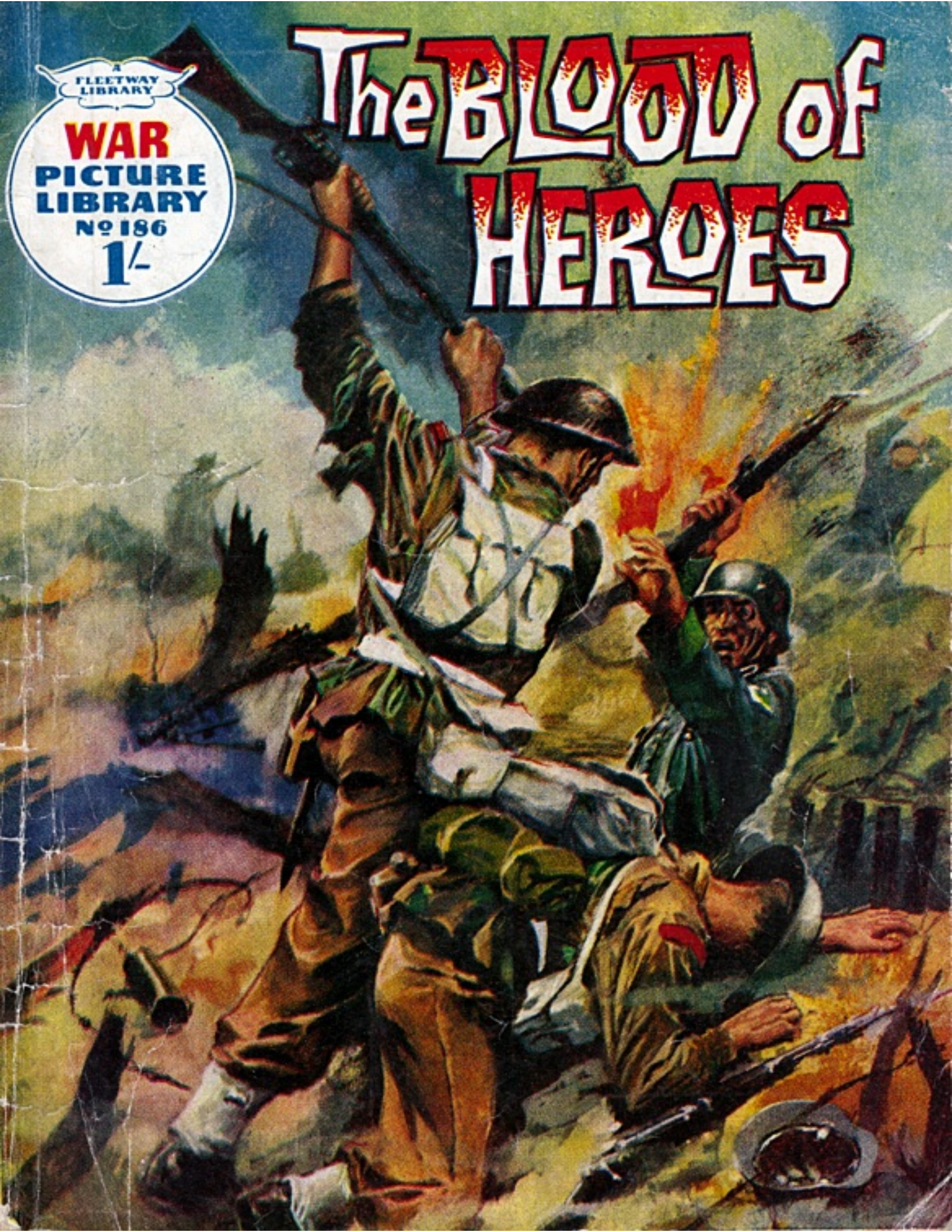
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# The BLOOD of HEROES





4

**ALL-ACTION ISSUES EVERY MONTH**★ No. 97 **KILLER PEAK**

They fought a mountain—and each other—for a secret buried beyond the snowline.

★ No. 98 **FIGHTING PATROL**

Death stared them in the face—yet they did not flinch.

★ No. 99 **BATTLE ROYAL**

To save an army, he must lose his Kingdom!

★ No. 100 **FEAR NAUGHT**

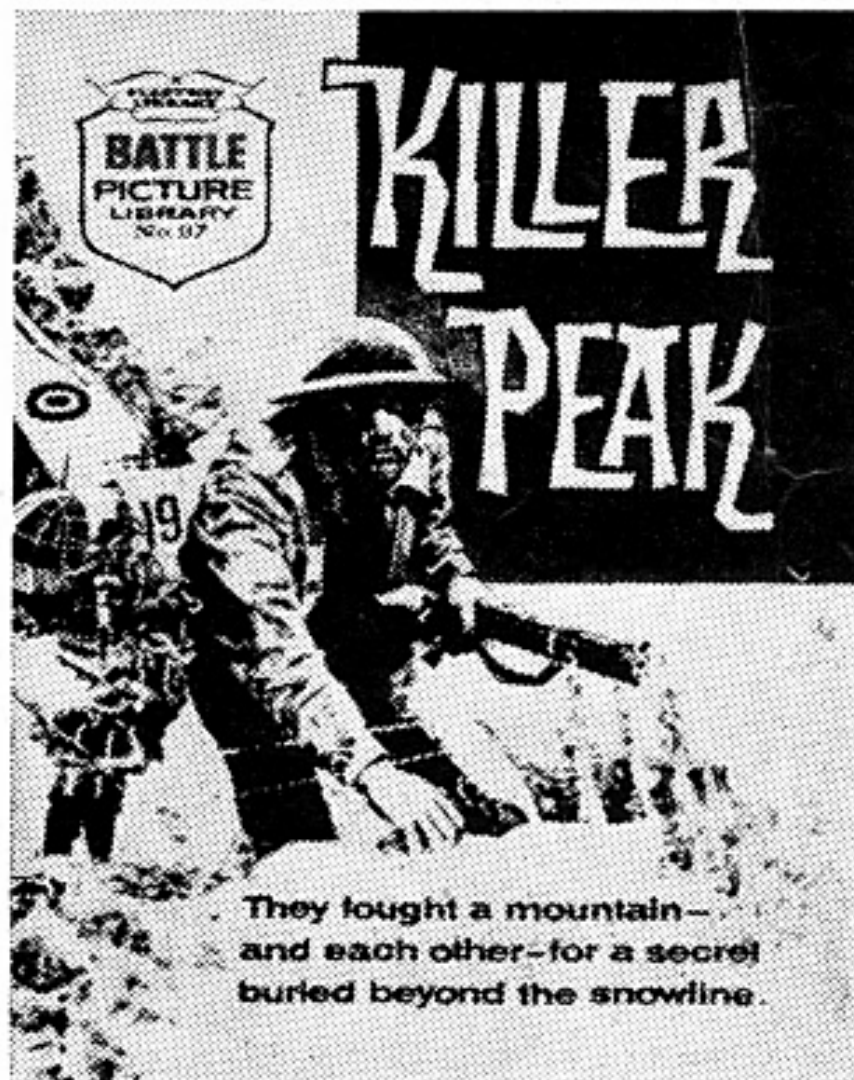
The harsh light of battle will show up the true worth of any man.

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# THE BLOOD OF HEROES

IN THE ANNALS OF WAR THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE MAN WHO HAS LIVED ON AFTER THE BATTLES HAVE BEEN FOUGHT AND WON. HE IS **THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER**, A MAN IN WHOSE VEINS THE BLOOD OF HEROES FLOWS





## Chapter 1. *The Unknown Soldier*

ONE STORMY NIGHT OUTSIDE ARRAS, IN WORLD WAR ONE, A THIN LINE OF KHAKI-CLAD FIGURES FACED THE GREY MENACE OF THE CRACK IMPERIAL PRUSSIAN GUARDS AS THEY SWARMED TO THE ATTACK . . .



BAYONETS GLINTED IN THE HALF-LIGHT. MEN NERVED THEMSELVES FOR THE SHOCK OF CLOSE-QUARTER FIGHTING. AMONG THEM WAS A YOUNG TOMMY . . . AND IT WAS HIS BAPTISM OF FIRE.

NOW THEN, PRIVATE HARGREAVES!  
KEEP YOUR FACE TURNED TO 'EM  
. . . AND DON'T FORGET  
THAT BAYONET DRILL!  
OVER THE TOP  
WITH YOU!

I'LL  
NEVER STAND IT!  
MY KNEES ARE  
LIKE WATER!





LIKE MANY OTHER MEN, PRIVATE HARGREAVES FELT ONLY THE PARALYSING CHILL OF FEAR IN HIS BONES AS THE PLATOON HURLED THEMSELVES OVER THE TOP TO MEET THE ENEMY...



NEXT INSTANT, HE FOUND HIMSELF IN THE INSANE CONFUSION OF SHOUTING, STRUGGLING MEN. DESPERATELY, HE WARDED OFF A VICIOUS BAYONET THRUST

I'M GOING TO DIE . . .





BUT THE BRITISH HELD THAT FIRST WAVE OF ATTACKERS AND, AS IF IN A NIGHTMARE, HARGREAVES FOUND HIMSELF BEING HELPED TO HIS FEET BY HIS BURLY SERGEANT . . . ALL UNAWARE THAT HE HAD KILLED HIS FIRST ENEMY SOLDIER . . .

ON YOUR FEET, LAD! WE BROKE 'EM UP, THAT TIME! BACK TO THE TRENCH . . .

IT . . . IT'S ALL OVER . . . ?

THE FURY OF THE ATTACKS, THE WAITING BETWEEN THEM, TOLD ON THE MOST HARDENED VETERANS HOLDING THE FRONT-LINE TRENCHES.

THEY'LL COME IN AGAIN BEFORE DAWN, SERGEANT. THEY'RE DETERMINED TO OVERRUN THE NEXT VILLAGE BEFORE OUR REINFORCEMENTS CAN BE BROUGHT UP. IT RESTS WITH US . . .

I'LL HAVE THE MEN ON TOP LINE, SIR. WE WON'T RELAX . . .



BUT THE NEXT MOVE OF THE ENEMY CAUGHT THEM UNAWARES, FOR THE GERMANS USED THAT MOST DREADED AND SINISTER WEAPON . . . **CHLORINE GAS!**



IT WAS THE PANIC WHICH HAD BEEN WELLING IN PRIVATE HARGREAVES THAT SAVED HIS LIFE, FOR, AS HE TURNED IN BLIND FEAR FROM THIS FRESH HORROR, HE PLUNGED FULL LENGTH . . . INTO WATER!





... AND, STUMBLING UPRIGHT AGAIN, HE THREW HIS WATER-SOAKED SLEEVE ACROSS HIS NOSE AND MOUTH, AS HE FLED ON . . .



THE AMOUNT OF GAS WHICH SEEPED THROUGH INTO HIS LUNGS CAUSED HARGREAVES TO BECOME GIDDY . . . AND THE SCENE BEFORE HIS EYES BECAME SUDDENLY UNREAL . . .



HE STILL PLUNGED ON, HOWEVER, ON UNSTEADY LEGS . . . BUT ALL THE TIME, HIS SENSES WERE FAILING HIM . . .



AND THEN HE KNEW NO MORE . . .



AS HE LAY THERE, ALMOST SENSELESS, GASPING FOR LIFE, THE PRUSSIAN GUARDS MOUNTED THEIR NEXT ATTACK. THE SLUGGISH NIGHT BREEZE HAD DRIFTED MOST OF THE GAS AWAY



STILL SUFFERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE GAS, THE BRITISH TROOPS' DEFENCE WAS PITIFULLY INADEQUATE TO HOLD THE PRUSSIAN UNITS AS IT Poured INTO THEIR TRENCHES.



THE FIGHT WAS SHORT AND MERCILESS. IT WAS AN EXULTANT PRUSSIAN OFFICER WHO LED HIS MEN OUT OF THE TRENCHES AND ON TOWARDS THE TINY FRENCH VILLAGE OF LOSELLE . . .



LOSELLE WAS DARK AND DESERTED, FOR THE VILLAGERS HAD FLED FROM THEIR HOMES AT THE APPROACH OF THE GERMANS . . .





AS THE ARROGANT GERMAN INVADERS DEPLOYED THEIR FORCES IN THE VILLAGE, HOWEVER, ONE BRITISH SOLDIER STILL LIVED AMID THE CARNAGE . . .



SUDDENLY, PRIVATE HARGREAVES HEARD GUTTURAL VOICES AND THE CLATTER OF A GUN CARRIAGE . . . COMING FROM THE DIRECTION OF THE GERMAN LINES.



UNAWARE THAT ONE SURVIVOR REMAINED IN THE BRITISH LINES, THE GERMANS TOOK THEIR TIME AS THEY HEADED FOR THE FRENCH VILLAGE



THE COARSE LAUGHTER OF THE GERMAN SOLDIERS SICKENED HARGREAVES WHO HAD SEEN SO MANY COMRADES DIE. A SUDDEN, STRANGE CHANGE CAME OVER THE YOUNG SOLDIER . . .



HIS TREMBLING HANDS CLAMPED ON THE HANDLES OF THE MACHINE GUN AND A VENGEFUL STREAM OF BULLETS TRAVERSED THE ENEMY WITH THE GAS GENERATOR . . .



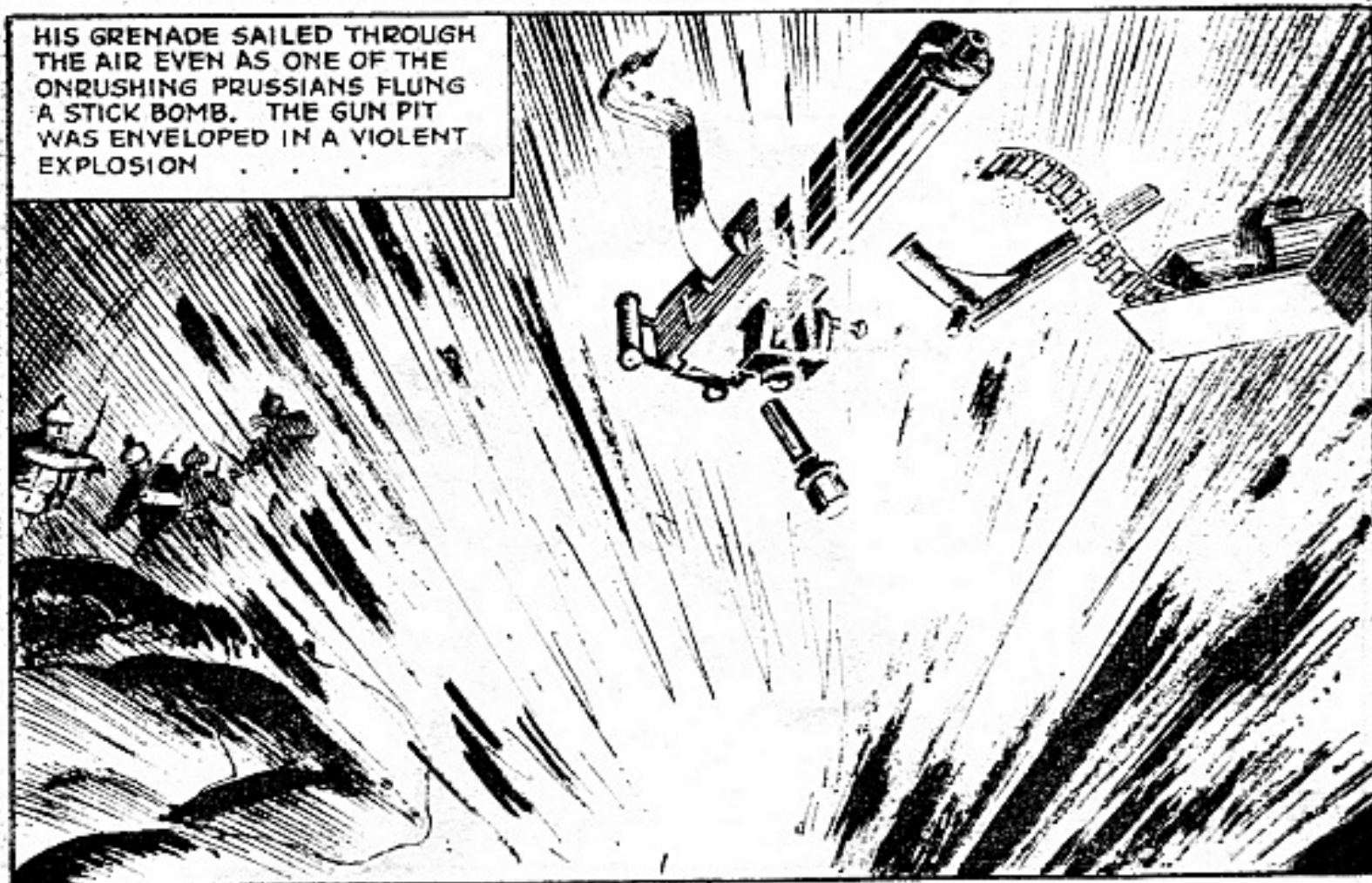


HARSH CRIES CAME FROM THE NEARBY VILLAGE AT THE BURST OF FIRE, YET PRIVATE HARGREAVES DID NOT FLINCH FROM THE NEMESIS THAT RUSHED TOWARDS HIM... FOR THERE WAS ONE MORE THING TO DO

I'VE GOT TO DESTROY THAT GAS GENERATOR COMPLETELY! GOT TO SAVE OUR REINFORCEMENTS...

FORWARD!  
KILL THE  
MAD DOG!

HIS GRENADE SAILED THROUGH THE AIR EVEN AS ONE OF THE ONRUSHING PRUSSIANS FLUNG A STICK BOMB. THE GUN PIT WAS ENVELOPED IN A VIOLENT EXPLOSION



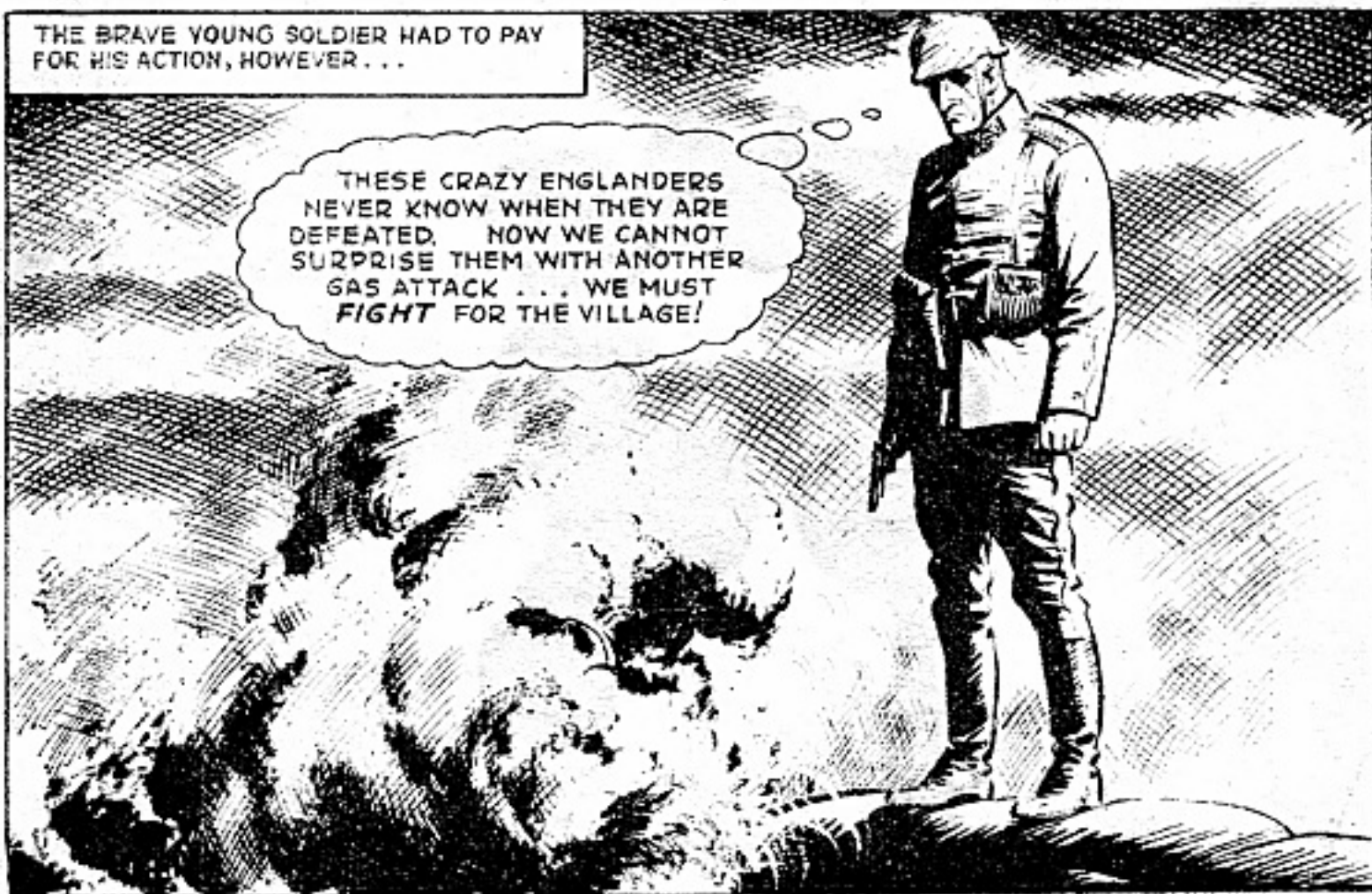
BUT THE BRITISH SOLDIER'S OWN GRENADE HAD FOUND ITS MARK . . .

HIMMEL!  
THE GAS  
GENERATOR!



THE BRAVE YOUNG SOLDIER HAD TO PAY  
FOR HIS ACTION, HOWEVER . . .

THESE CRAZY ENGLANDERS  
NEVER KNOW WHEN THEY ARE  
DEFEATED. NOW WE CANNOT  
SURPRISE THEM WITH ANOTHER  
GAS ATTACK . . . WE MUST  
**FIGHT** FOR THE VILLAGE!





THE SHAKEN PRUSSIAN OFFICER QUICKLY RALLIED HIS MEN BACK TO THEIR STRONGPOINTS. ROBBED OF THE ADVANTAGE OF THE GAS WEAPON, THEY WERE NOW ON EQUAL TERMS WITH THE BRITISH.

HERE COME THE TOMMIES!

... AND NOW WE MUST FIGHT THEM... WITH OUR BACKS TO THE WALL!

THE BRITISH TROOPS FLUNG THEMSELVES VENGEFULLY AT THE ENEMY, ROOTING THEM OUT OF THEIR POSITIONS DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY FOUGHT LIKE CORNERED RATS.

ONE MORE CHARGE, LADS... AND THEY'RE BEATEN!

AFTER THE VILLAGE HAD BEEN RETAKEN, A CAPTURED GERMAN OFFICER REVEALED THE TRUE HERO OF THE BRITISH VICTORY.

WE SHOULD HAVE DEFEATED YOU... BUT THIS SINGLE SOLDIER KNOCKED OUT OUR POISON GAS UNIT! YOU OWE HIM YOUR **LIVES**, ENGLANDERS!



THE FIRST WORLD WAR ENDED... BUT THE VILLAGERS OF LOSELLE DID NOT FORGET. IN THEIR TINY VILLAGE SQUARE THEY ERECTED A PERMANENT MONUMENT TO THE MAN WHO HAD DIED FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

... AND SO, MES AMIS... WE GATHER HERE TODAY TO PAY HOMAGE TO ONE WHOSE NAME WE SHALL NEVER KNOW... BUT WHOSE COURAGE WILL ALWAYS BE BEFORE US... **THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER.**

**LONG LIVE OUR UNKNOWN SOLDIER! VIVE LIBERTÉ!**





## Chapter 2. Salute to Liberty

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, THE LIBERTY OF FRANCE WAS AGAIN IN THE MELTING POT. ONCE MORE THE GERMAN JACKBOOTS STAMPED ACROSS THE COBBLED STREETS OF THE VILLAGE OF LOSELLE.



MAJOR ERNST BLOHM, OF THE TWENTY-FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION, TOOK A CURSORY LOOK AT THE STATUE THAT HAD BEEN RAISED TO A BRITISH PRIVATE IN WORLD WAR ONE

AN INTERESTING RELIC, HERR MAYOR! BUT DO NOT LET IT GIVE YOU IDEAS THAT THE BRITISH MADMEN WILL ATTEMPT TO SHOW THEIR HEROICS AGAINST GERMANY AGAIN. WE HAVE DRIVEN THEM FROM FRANCE... FOR EVER!



IT IS MERELY A STATUE, HERR MAJOR... TO THE SPIRIT OF A BRAVE SOLDIER...

THE NAZI SWUNG ROUND ANGRILY ON THE PROUD FRENCHMAN

THE ONLY **BRAVE** SOLDIERS ARE **GERMAN**, HERR MAJOR! ONLY FOOLS AND CRIMINALS DEFY US! DO NOT LET YOURSELF FORGET THAT!

I SHALL REMEMBER, HERR MAJOR... MY MEMORY IS A LONG ONE...

THE HIDDEN MEANING BEHIND THE MAYOR'S WORDS ESCAPED THE ARROGANT GERMAN.

YES, HERR MAJOR... TWICE OUR VILLAGE HAS BEEN DESPOILED BY THE BOCHE... IN MY LIFETIME! YOU WILL SOON FIND THAT **THIS** TIME WE HAVE GROWN **TEETH**...



AT THAT VERY MOMENT, IN A NEARBY WOOD

SO, MES AMIS, WE ARE THE FIRST OF THE UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT IN THIS DISTRICT. SOON WE SHALL GROW STRONG. BUT, UNTIL THEN, WE STRIKE... WHERE THE ENEMY IS WEAKEST!

BRavo, L'RESISTANCE! LEAD US AGAINST THE BOCHE, MON AMI!





THE FRENCH RESISTANCE FIGHTERS, OR MAQUIS, AS THEY CAME TO BE CALLED, SPRANG FROM SUCH SMALL GROUPS OF EX-SOLDIERS AND PATRIOTS. BY DAY, THEY PLANNED

THE BOCHE CONCENTRATE AROUND LOSSELLE, MY FRIEND... BUT THERE ARE OTHER POINTS WHICH ARE MORE VULNERABLE.



BY NIGHT, THEY STRUCK . . .



THE COLD-BLOODED DARING OF THE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS GREW Apace . . . AND THEIR SUPPLY OF CAPTURED ARMS MOUNTED.

THAT TRICK OF BLINDING THE BOCHE OUTPOSTS BY HEADLIGHTS AND THEN FIRING, PAYS OFF DIVIDENDS, LOUIS! SEE . . . WE COLLECT ENOUGH ARMS TO SUPPLY AN ARMY!

AND TONIGHT  
WE KILLED TEN GERMANS!  
IT IS GOOD!

BUT THE GERMANS WERE NOT ENEMIES TO BE UNDERRATED AND, DURING A SURPRISE AMBUSH ONE DAWN

SACRE BLEU!  
WE ARE  
TRAPPED!

DROP YOUR GUNS!  
SURRENDER . . . YOU  
FRENCH BOGS!



AMONG THOSE WHO WERE CAPTURED IN THAT SHOCK COUNTER ATTACK WAS THE MAYOR OF LOSELLE.

SO... MY FINE MAJOR! YOUR MEMORY IS NOT SO GOOD AS YOU CLAIM. YOU LEAD THESE CARRION OF YOURS AGAINST THE MIGHT OF GERMANY AND EXPECT TO LIVE!



YOU ARE MISTAKEN, HERR MAJOR. I DO NOT EXPECT TO LIVE. IT IS AN HONOUR... TO DIE!

AN HONOUR EASILY COME BY, FRENCH SCUM!



BEFORE THE ASTONISHED EYES OF THE GERMAN MAJOR, THE MAYOR OF LOSELLE TURNED, DREW HIMSELF UP TO ATTENTION AND PROUDLY SALUTED THE STATUE TO THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER.

... AN HONOUR, AS I SAY... TO FACE OUR STATUE ONCE MORE... AND SALUTE, HERR MAJOR...



WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? DOES THIS FOOL IMAGINE THAT STATUE CAN SAVE HIM?

MAJOR ERNST BLOHM WAS NO IDEALIST!

FELDWEBEL! STAND TO YOUR FIRING PARTY! THIS FRENCH CUR SHALL HAVE HIS WISH . . . AND LET THE WHOLE VILLAGE WITH IT!

JA WOHL, HERR MAJOR.

THERE, IN THE BRIGHT SUMMER SUNSHINE WITH THE VILLAGERS OF LOSELLE LOOKING ON, A BRAVE MAN DIED

VIVE  
LIBERTÉ!

FEUER!



BUT, LATER, MAJOR BLOHM GAZED FROM THE WINDOW OF HIS COMMANDEERED HOUSE ACROSS THE SQUARE, AND WONDERED

PAH... IT IS ONLY A STATUE!  
WHY SHOULD IT SEEM TO BE  
SOME KIND OF SYMBOL  
TO THESE FRENCH  
BUMPKINS? A  
STATUE TO SOME  
**ORDINARY**  
SOLDIER! OUR  
GLORIOUS  
TROOPS KILLED  
IN THE FIRST  
WORLD  
WAR.



THE GERMAN OFFICER'S TEUTONIC MIND COULD NOT GRAPPLE WITH SUCH THINGS . . . BUT HE SOON FOUND OUT HE HAD NOT DESTROYED THE MORE MATERIAL FORCE OF THE MAQUIS!



PIGS! THERE'S  
SOMETHING FOR  
THE MAYOR OF  
LOSELLE!

... AND OUR MACHINE  
GUNNERS WILL GIVE  
THEM SOME MORE  
MEDICINE OF THE SAME  
BRAND, MON AMI!

THE MINELAYERS HUGGED THE GROUND FOR COVER AS THE HIDDEN GUNNERS OF THE MAQUIS OPENED FIRE ON THE DISRUPTED INFANTRY COLUMN . . .



WORD OF THE RAID REACHED MAJOR BLOHM'S HEADQUARTERS AND HIS REACTION WAS SWIFT. . .

I SHALL TEACH  
THESE FRENCHMEN  
A LESSON THEY WILL  
REMEMBER! TAKE  
EVERY TENTH MAN  
IN THE VILLAGE . . .  
**AND SHOOT  
THEM!**





ONCE AGAIN, HOWEVER, THE GERMAN MAJOR WAS BEWILDERED BY THE CALMNESS WITH WHICH THESE VILLAGERS LINED UP TO DIE AFTER SALUTING THE STATUE TO AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER.



SHALL I EVER BREAK THE SPIRIT OF THESE FOOLS? IT IS AS IF THE STATUE REPRESENTS **SOMETHING** TO THEM WHICH GIVES THEM MORAL STRENGTH...

HARDLY HAD THE GUNSHOTS ROLLED AWAY, AS THE FRENCHMEN PAID THE PRICE BLOHM HAD DEMANDED... THAN THE FIELD TELEPHONE RANG.



AN  
**ATTACK**  
YOU SAY...!

JA, HERR KOMMANDANT... TEN KILOMETRES FROM LOSELLE. A DETACHMENT OF OUR GRENADIERS WIPED OUT...

THE PHONE SLAMMED BACK ON ITS STAND AS THE GERMAN OFFICER'S NERVELESS FINGERS RELEASED IT.

I CANNOT BELIEVE IT... OUR GRENADIERS ARE THE FINEST TROOPS IN THE REGIMENT! WHAT ARE WE **FIGHTING** AGAINST? WHAT **DRIVES** THEM ON?



MAJOR ERNST BLOHM WAS NOT WITHOUT A CERTAIN BRUTAL CUNNING . . . OR FORTHRIGHT GERMAN THOROUGHNESS . . .

THAT STATUE IS THE SYMBOL OF THEIR RESISTANCE! IT ACTS ON THE SIMPLE FOOLS LIKE A FETISH! **SMASH IT DOWN!**

PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER, HERR MAJOR, TO CALL IN OUR PANZER GROUP TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM...

SEVERAL KILOMETRES AWAY, A PANZER GROUP WAS DEPLOYED TO PATROL THE FLAT COUNTRY AROUND THE VILLAGE. BUT THE MAQUIS WERE TUNED IN TO THEIR WAVELENGTH

IT IS THE GERMAN H.Q. AT LOSELLE! THEY ARE CALLING IN A PANZER TANK TO SMASH THE VILLAGE STATUE . . .

QUICKLY... WE MUST ALERT THE OTHERS!



SO IT WAS THAT AS A GERMAN TANK THUNDERED ALONG THE ROAD,  
A RECEPTION COMMITTEE AWAITED IT . . .

THE STUPID  
BOCHE HAVE LEFT  
THE HATCH OPEN  
... ALL READY  
FOR US!

HURRY...  
MOUNT THE  
CASING!

A MOMENT LATER, THE FRENCHMAN HAD  
SCRAMBLED ON TO THE STEEL HULL, AND  
HAD LOBBED A GRENADE INTO THE OPEN  
HATCHWAY OF THE TURRET.



THERE WAS A SUDDEN GUTTURAL YELL OF ALARM . . . AND A VICIOUS, MUFFLED EXPLOSION AS THE MAGNIS TOOK TO THEIR HEELS.



MAJOR ERNST BLOHM WAS WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR THE PANZER TO ARRIVE IN THE VILLAGE SQUARE OF LOSELLE, HIS TEMPER STRAINED ALMOST TO BREAKING POINT . . .

FOOL! WHERE IS THE PANZER I REQUESTED? ALREADY WE HAVE WAITED AN HOUR . . .



IT IS ON ITS WAY, HERR MAJOR. I HAVE CONFIRMATION . . .

THEN SEND A SCOUT CAR! FIND IT!



THE MAQUIS UNIT WHO HAD DESTROYED THE PANZER TANK WERE ABOUT TO GIVE THE GERMANS THE REPLY TO THEIR SIGNAL . . . IN NO UNCERTAIN FASHION . . .

QUICKLY . . . INTO THE REAR OF THE HOUSES! WE SHALL THEN HAVE A CLEAR ARC OF FIRE INTO THE SQUARE!

THE BOCHE PIGS WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT THEM!

FROM WINDOWS AND DOORWAYS AROUND THE SQUARE, A MURDEROUS FIRE RIPPED INTO THE RANKS OF THE ENEMY.

HIMMEL! WE ARE TRAPPED!



SOME TRIED TO RUN . . . SOME TRIED TO FIGHT  
 . . . BUT THERE WAS NO ESCAPE . . .

ONLY ONE SOLDIER  
 WILL REMAIN ALIVE IN THAT  
 SQUARE . . . AND HE IS MADE  
 OF STONE! LONG LIVE THE  
 UNKNOWN SOLDIER!



IT WAS PERHAPS, IN THOSE LAST FEW AWFUL SECONDS,  
 THAT MAJOR ERNST BLOHM OF THE ELITE TWENTY-FIRST  
 INFANTRY KNEW THE TRUTH BEHIND THAT MASS OF  
 CARVED GRANITE WHICH TOWERED ABOVE HIM . . .

THEY . . . **WIN!** THEY WILL ALWAYS  
 WIN . . . BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE . . . IN WHAT  
 THIS STATUE REPRESENTS . . . HUMAN COURAGE  
 . . . AND FREEDOM! **WE SHALL BE DEFEATED..!**





## Chapter 3. *Battle Proud*

IN THE LONG, BITTER MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED, THE MAQUIS STRUCK AGAIN AND AGAIN . . . TO VANISH INTO THIN AIR LIKE WRAITHS! BUT ALWAYS THE VILLAGE REMAINED DESERTED . . . UNTIL, ONE DAY . . . THE 6TH. JUNE, 1944. . .



THE DAY OF RECKONING HAD FINALLY ARRIVED FOR NAZI GERMANY. AMONG THE ALLIED TROOPS WHO POURED ON TO THE BEACHES OF OCCUPIED EUROPE WAS A BRITISH PLATOON . . .



COME ON, HORROX!  
FOLLOW ME IN . . .  
AND WE'LL ROOT  
OUT THIS JERRY  
ANT HILL!

BUT WE . . . WE'RE  
RIGHT UNDER THEIR  
FIRE, SARGE!

THE TOUGH SERGEANT KELLY ROUNDED BELLIGERENTLY ON THE YOUNG PRIVATE . . . HE HAD LITTLE TIME FOR SHIRKERS!



STOP SKULKING THERE, HORROX! GET ON YOUR FEET AND *MOVE!*

WHILE THE REST OF THE PLATOON GAVE THEM COVER FIRE, SERGEANT KELLY TOOK HORROX AND ANOTHER MAN TO OUTFLANK THE STRONGPOINT . . .

A COUPLE OF GRENADES SHOULD DO THE JOB. COVER ME IN, HORROX AND DON'T MUFF IT!





HORROX OPENED UP WITH A NERVOUS BURST FROM HIS STEN GUN AS KELLY WORMED HIS WAY FORWARD . . . IMMEDIATELY, THE GERMAN MACHINE GUNNER SWITCHED HIS FIRE . . .



BUT KELLY HAD ALREADY CLOSED WITH THE ENEMY. HE WAS A MAN WHO SEEMED TO WELCOME DANGER . . .

SHARE THAT, JERRY!  
HERE'S ANOTHER  
FOR LUCK!



## The Blood of Heroes

THE PANIC-STRICKEN YELLS OF THE DEFENDERS WITHIN THE ENEMY PILL-BOX WERE ABRUPTLY SILENCED AS THE SECONDS TICKED AWAY . . . AND THE GRENADES EXPLODED. THE PLATOON MOVED FORWARD AGAIN . . .



WELL, SOLDIER BOY . . .  
THERE'S YOUR FIRST TASTE OF  
WAR! THINK YOU'LL LIVE LONG  
ENOUGH TO LEARN FROM IT?

THE BULLYING  
DEVIL! HE *KNOWS*  
I'M SCARED . . .

THEY GLIMPSED SQUARE-HELMETED FIGURES MOVING SOME DISTANCE AHEAD  
AND THE SERGEANT TURNED AND SNAPPED AN ORDER.



GET BUSY WITH  
THAT MORTAR THERE!  
DROP A FEW ON THOSE  
JERRIES BEYOND THAT  
RIDGE! REST OF YOU,  
READY TO MOVE!

WHY CAN'T HE  
WAIT? WE COULD BE  
RUNNING INTO A  
WHOLE COMPANY  
OF THE GERMANS!



BUT FEAR . . . OR EVEN CAUTION . . . HAD LITTLE PLACE IN THE TOUGH SERGEANT'S MAKE-UP. AS THE MORTAR RANGED THE ENEMY POSITION, HE LED THE CHARGE IN



FORTUNATELY, THERE WERE ONLY A FEW OF THE ENEMY MANNING AN ADVANCE OBSERVATION POINT. IF ANYTHING, THE LACK OF OPPOSITION DISAPPOINTED SERGEANT KELLY.



THE PLATOON PUSHED ON TO THE VILLAGE OF LOSELLE. THE GERMANS HAD WITHDRAWN... AND FOR THE FIRST TIME FOR ALMOST FOUR YEARS, THE FRENCHMAN HAD RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGE.




IT WAS AS THE PLATOON WAITED FOR COMPANY ORDERS THAT KELLY NOTICED THE STATUE . . .

THE FRENCHMAN WENT ON TO TELL SERGEANT KELLY THE FULL STORY OF THE STATUE . . . INCLUDING THE PART IT HAD PLAYED DURING THE OCCUPATION








WHAT D'YOU MEAN . . . **MANY** BRAVE MEN? THE STATUE WAS ERECTED TO **ONE** MAN, WASN'T IT? LIKE A MEDAL . . . THAT'S GIVEN TO **ONE** MAN . . .


I DO NOT THINK YOU UNDERSTAND, MON AMI . . . THIS STATUE REPRESENTS MORE THAN ONE MAN'S BRAVERY OR ONE MAN'S DEATH. IT WAS HERE THEY EXECUTED OUR MAYOR, OUR RESISTANCE MEN . . . AND WHERE WE KILLED THE BOCHE MAJOR. OH, NO . . . NOT JUST **ONE** MAN, M'SIEU . . .

SERGEANT KELLY STOMPED BACK TO HIS PLATOON, FROWNING IRRITABLY . . .

THE OLD FRENCHMAN, LOUIS VERDAN, TURNED AWAY, A FAINT SMILE ON HIS LIPS . . .



THE OLD FOOL'S CRAZY . . . WHOEVER HEARD OF A STATUE TO **ONE** MAN REPRESENTING A WHOLE VILLAGE! IT'S LIKE SAYING THIS MEDAL DOESN'T BELONG TO MY FATHER . . . LIKE THE MEDAL **I'M** GOING TO WIN BEFORE THE WAR IS OVER . . .



THAT SERGEANT . . . HE ROARS LIKE A LION. BUT IT IS NOT ALWAYS THE MAN WITH THE LOUDEST VOICE WHO HAS THE MOST COURAGE.

THE INFANTRY COMPANY TO WHICH SERGEANT KELLY'S PLATOON BELONGED WAS IN REAL TROUBLE AT THAT MOMENT, FIGHTING OFF A PINCHER MOVEMENT THAT HAD SEALED OFF THE ROAD THROUGH THE LOSELLE SECTOR.



THE GERMANS WERE THRUSTING HARD AGAINST THE BRITISH LINE, DETERMINED TO CONTAIN THEIR ADVANCE.





WHILE THE BRITISH WERE HELD DOWN, FURTHER ENEMY UNITS WERE ABLE TO REINFORCE THEIR DEFENCES OF THAT WHOLE SECTOR.

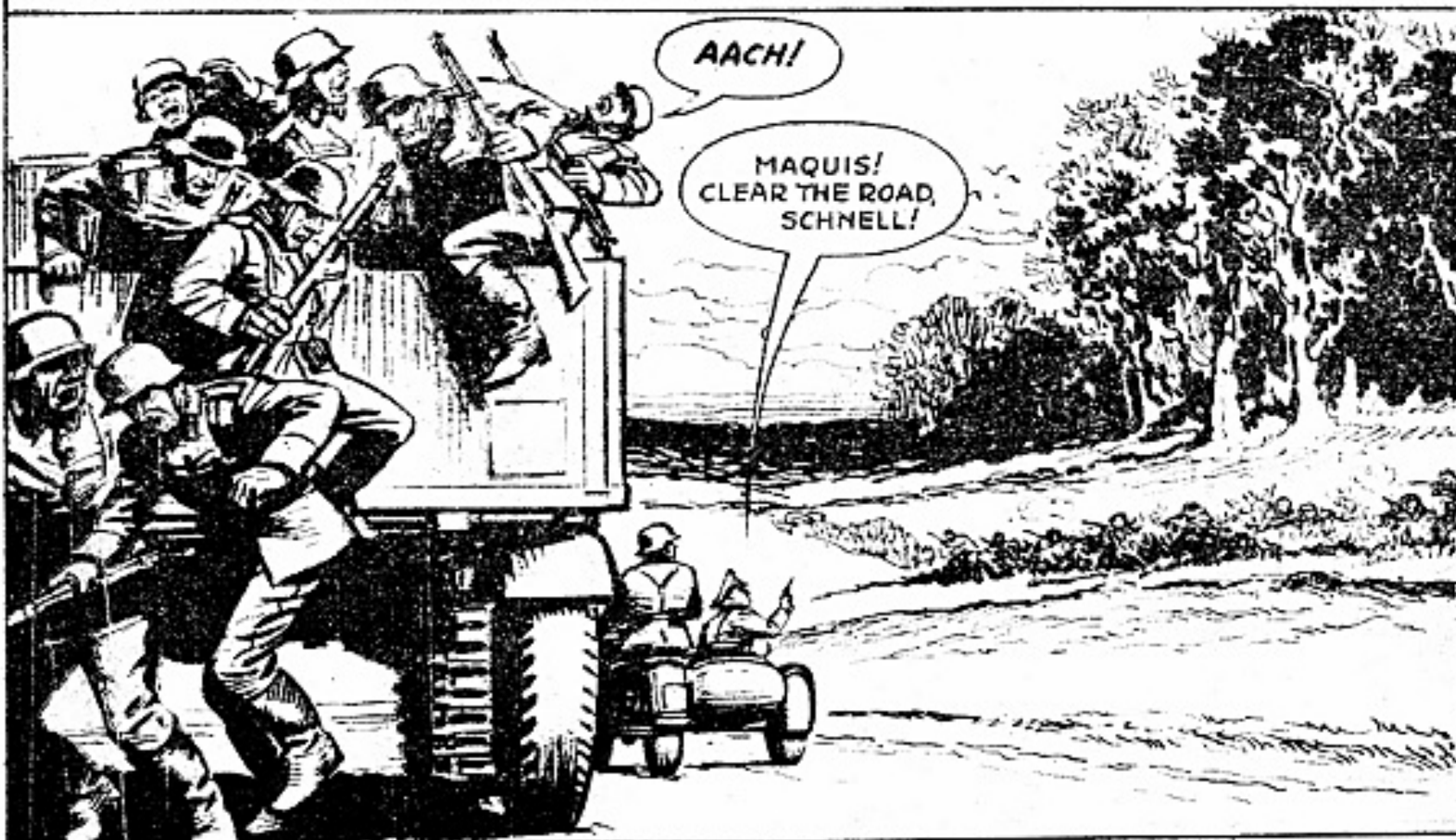
THERE IS NO SIGN OF HEAVY ENEMY STRENGTH IN LOSELLE! WE SHALL TAKE THE VILLAGE AGAIN AND ESTABLISH A STRONGPOINT THERE!

A COUNTER-ATTACK IS WHAT WE NEED, HERR LEUTNANT. IT WILL STIFFEN OUR RESISTANCE TO THE ENEMY LANDINGS.

BUT THE OLD FRENCHMAN, LOUIS VERDAN, HAD ALREADY FORESEEN THE ENEMY'S INTENTION AND HAD ALERTED THE LOCAL MAQUIS GROUP.

AH! OLD LOUIS WAS RIGHT! THERE IS INDEED A DANGER OF A COUNTER-ATTACK! WE MUST HIT THEM FIRST!

THE FRENCHMEN HAD BEEN SPOLING FOR A FIGHT, AND THEY FLUNG THEMSELVES INTO FIRING POSITIONS WITH ENTHUSIASM.



WITHIN SECONDS, THE MAQUIS FUSILLADE HAD CLAIMED MANY VICTIMS AND HAD SCATTERED THE REMAINDER OF THE NAZIS IN SEARCH OF COVER.





THE DISTANT SOUND OF ACTION REACHED THE EARS OF SERGEANT KELLY BACK IN THE VILLAGE AND HE HURRIEDLY PARADED HIS PLATOON.

C'MON, YOU BUNCH! GET MOVING THERE... **AT THE DOUBLE!** WE'RE MOVING OUT!

M'SIEU... YOU CANNOT MARCH YOUR MEN OUT THERE! THE COUNTRYSIDE IS ALIVE WITH GERMANS!

TO THE TOUGH SERGEANT, LOUIS VERDAN WAS MERELY AN OLD VILLAGER BETTER EMPLOYED TAKING CARE OF HIS CHICKENS!

GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU OLD FOOL! THERE'S FIGHTING TO BE DONE! FALL IN, YOU MEN!

BUT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND! THE MAQUIS IS IN COMMAND...

PRIVATE HORROX HESITANTLY INTERVENED...

PERHAPS WE SHOULD LISTEN TO WHAT HE SAYS, SERGEANT...

... AND SIT TIGHT IN THE VILLAGE, EH, HORROX? THAT WOULD BE JUST UP YOUR STREET! NO, WE'RE GOING OUT TO FIGHT!

MAKING NO USE OF WHAT COVER THERE WAS, SERGEANT KELLY MARCHED HIS MEN BOLDLY DOWN THE ROAD . . . BREAKING INTO THE DOUBLE AS THEY APPROACHED THE SCENE OF ACTION.



BUT EVEN AS THE PLATOON BROKE INTO A RUN, A MORTAR BOMB BURST AMONG THEM





TWO MORE BOMBS PLUMMETED DOWN AND THE SERGEANT HASTILY LED THE RUSH FOR THE COVER OF A NEARBY CLUMP OF TREES.

RUN, YOU FOOLS!  
GET OUT OF RANGE . . .



BUT THE GERMANS WERE SWIFT TO ZERO IN ON THE PLATOON AGAIN. WHITE-FACED, HORROR FLUNG HIMSELF FLAT AND THE OTHERS WERE QUICK TO APE HIS EXAMPLE.



THIS IS MURDER!  
WE'LL BE KILLED!

THE SOUNDS OF THE ORIGINAL SKIRMISH HAD ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF A NAZI PATROL AND IT WAS THEIR MORTAR FIRE THAT WAS PINNING DOWN SERGEANT KELLY'S MEN.

AH! THE ENGLANDERS ARE TRAPPED! NOW WE ATTACK!



SUDDENLY, THE MORTAR STOPPED FIRING AND THE BRITISH PLATOON RAISED THEIR HEADS IN RELIEF. . . ONLY TO SEE A GREY-GREEN LINE OF FIGURES ADVANCING MENACINGLY UPON THEM.





TAKEN BY SURPRISE, KELLY AND HIS MEN MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN WIPE OUT... BUT THEY HAD ALLIES CLOSE AT HAND, READY AND WILLING TO HELP THEM.



FROM THE COVER OF A LOW STONE WALL, THE MAQUIS POURED A FIERCE ENFILADE FIRE UPON THE ATTACKING GERMAN PATROL.



CAUGHT IN OPEN COUNTRY, MANY OF THE NAZIS WERE CUT DOWN ALMOST AT ONCE. THE REST FLED.



RECOVERING FROM HIS SHOCK, SERGEANT KELLY'S BRASH CONFIDENCE REASSERTED ITSELF! THE LEADER OF THE MAQUIS FROWNED AT HIS TONE.

I AM IN COMMAND OF THE LOCAL MAQUIS, M'SIEU... ALLOW ME TO...

ANOTHER PERISHIN' AMATEUR SOLDIER! I DON'T NEED ANY ADVICE FROM YOUR KIND!

THE MAQUIS FIGHTERS SCOWLED AT THAT INSULT AND THE SITUATION WAS BEGINNING TO LOOK UGLY, WHEN OLD LOUIS MERDAN ARRIVED.

THIS IS NO TIME FOR QUARRELS! BACK TO YOUR TRANSPORT... BEFORE THE BOCHE RETURNS!



THE REMNANTS OF SERGEANT KELLY'S PLATOON LOOKED ON . . . AMAZED AT THE AUTHORITY THE OLD FRENCHMAN WIELDED. IT WAS LATER, WHEN THEY WERE SAFELY IN THE WOOD, THAT LOUIS VERDAN TOOK THE MAQUIS LEADER TO ONE SIDE . . .



SERGEANT KELLY BUTTONHOLED ONE OF THE FRENCH FREEDOM FIGHTERS . . .

MY FATHER WON THIS MEDAL FIGHTING FOR YOU PEOPLE IN WORLD WAR ONE . . . HE STOPPED HALF A JERRY INFANTRY UNIT WITH A MACHINE GUN OUTSIDE A VILLAGE. CALLED PONT CROIX . . .

PONT CROIX! BUT THAT IS THE VILLAGE . . .

ALL UNAWARE THAT THE FRENCHMAN WAS LOOKING AT HIM STRANGELY, SERGEANT KELLY WENT ON BOASTFULLY . . .

THE KRAUTS WOULD HAVE BROKEN THROUGH TO ARRAS IF MY FATHER HADN'T SMASHED THAT ATTACK SINGLE-HANDED. HE DESERVED THE V.C., I RECKON . . .

M'SIEU . . . I THINK SOON WE SHALL SHOW YOU THIS VILLAGE OF PONT CROIX. PERHAPS IT IS NOT AS YOU IMAGINE IT . . .

AT THAT MOMENT, MORTARS BEGAN TO RANGE ON THE WOOD AND THE NAZIS WITHDREW HURRIEDLY, LEAVING THE IRATE KELLY TO BRING HIS MEN AFTER THEM.

RUNNING AWAY... THAT'S NO WAY TO WIN A WAR! I'LL SHOW THEM... IF I HAVE TO FIGHT THE WHOLE JERRY ARMY ON MY OWN!



SERGEANT KELLY GOT HIS CHANCE SOONER THAN HE EXPECTED. THEY WERE HARDLY OUT OF THE WOOD WHEN THE GERMANS, WHO HAD REGROUPED, MOVED IN AGAIN.

LOOK, MORE JERRIES!  
LET 'EM HAVE IT,  
YOU MEN!





THE MAQUIS, UNDER THE BATTLE-WISE LEADERSHIP OF ITS OFFICERS, DEPLOYED QUICKLY . . . BUT SERGEANT KELLY LED A BULL-HEADED RUSH TOWARD THE ENEMY.



ONCE AGAIN, THE SERGEANT'S TACTICS TOOK THE NAZIS BY SURPRISE . . .



BUT AMONG THE MEN WHO CHARGED BEHIND KELLY, THERE WAS ONE MAN, HORROX, WHO FELT THAT THE BULL-HEADED SERGEANT'S LUCK COULD NOT LAST...

THE NEXT TIME MUST SURELY  
BE OUR LAST... IF  
SOMETHING DOESN'T  
STOP HIM...



WITH THE GERMAN PATROL ROUTED, KELLY TURNED CONTEMPTUOUSLY TO THE MAQUIS, THE FLUSH OF VICTORY ON HIS TOUGH FACE...

THAT'S THE WAY  
TO FIGHT A WAR,  
FRENCHMEN! SKULKING  
IN THE UNDERGROWTH  
WON'T BREAK THE  
JERRIES' HEARTS!

YOU FIGHT LIKE  
A MADMAN, M'SIEU  
... AND WITH AS  
LITTLE SKILL! I HOPE  
YOU WILL LEARN  
BETTER BEFORE  
IT IS TOO LATE...



SERGEANT KELLY DID NOT SENSE THE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE OLD FRENCHMAN'S WORDS UNTIL MUCH LATER, WHEN HE WAS LED TO A SCENE OF DESOLATION . . .

... I HAVE HEARD YOU SPEAK OF YOUR  
FATHER, AND THE MEDAL HE WON IN THE  
FIRST WORLD WAR, SERGEANT KELLY. PERHAPS  
IT IS THE THOUGHT OF THAT WHICH MAKES  
YOU, TOO, DETERMINED TO BE A HERO...  
**AT ANY PRICE?**



MAYBE!  
BUT WHAT HAVE YOU  
BROUGHT ME TO THIS  
DUMP FOR?



LOUIS VERDAN'S SEAMED FACE WAS STERN AS HE INDICATED THE SHATTERED AND OVERGROWN VILLAGE BELOW THEM . . .

HERE IS YOUR ANSWER, SERGEANT KELLY. THIS IS THE VILLAGE OF PONT CROIX . . . AS THE BOCHE LEFT IT AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR, NO-ONE HAS REBUILT IT FOR WE LEAVE IT AS A MONUMENT . . . **TO COWARDICE!**

**PONT CROIX!** BUT MY FATHER SAVED IT . . . HE WON HIS MEDAL SAYING IT. **WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, YOU OLD FOOL!**

OLD LOUIS VERDAN'S VOICE WENT ON, RELENTLESSLY, BRINGING TO LIFE UGLY AND BITTER FRAGMENTS FROM MEMORY AND TIME — OF SLAUGHTER AND PANIC — OF DEFEAT AND DISHONOUR . . .

. . . ON THAT DAY IN JUNE, THE BOCHE WERE ADVANCING AND A COMBINED FORCE OF FRENCH AND BRITISH INFANTRY WAS SENT TO HOLD PONT CROIX. THEY FAILED! THE GERMANS USED GAS . . . PANIC SET IN . . . THE WHOLE LINE BROKE. **THEY RAN..** AND THE BOCHE BURNED DOWN PONT CROIX . . .

I . . . I DON'T BELIEVE IT! YOU'RE LYING!

LOUIS VERDAN'S VOICE WAS MORE GENTLE NOW . . .

STONES DON'T LIE,  
SERGEANT KELLY! BECAUSE  
OF THE DISHONOUR . . . THE  
SMEAR ON THE BRAVERY OF  
TWO GREAT ARMIES, THIS VILLAGE  
WAS LEFT TO ROT. BUT BECAUSE  
WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET, A  
STONE WAS LEFT BEHIND,  
INSCRIBED WITH THE DATE  
AND THE NAMES OF THOSE  
WHO FAILED . . .

LET ME SEE IT!  
LET ME SEE  
IT!

NO-ONE MOVED AS SERGEANT KELLY BLUNDERED DOWN THE HILL TOWARDS THE VILLAGE. NO-ONE MOVED . . . OR SPOKE, EXCEPT FOR LOUIS VERDAN

A MAN SHOULD KNOW THAT  
BRAVE MEN DO NOT HAVE TO HIDE  
THEIR FAILURES. WE DO NOT ERECT  
OUR MONUMENTS ONLY TO THE ONES  
LIKE OUR UNKNOWN SOLDIER . . .





IT WAS A LONG TIME BEFORE SERGEANT KELLY TRUDGED BACK UP THE HILL. HIS FACE WAS SET IN GRIM LINES, BUT THERE WAS ONLY SYMPATHY IN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO WATCHED HIM.



THEY SET OFF BACK TO THE VILLAGE OF LOSELLE, THE SOLDIERS IN THE LEAD...



WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE A MAN LIKE SERGEANT KELLY WHEN A THING SUCH AS THIS HAPPENS, MON AMI?

WHO KNOWS?  
HE IS STRONG  
AND HIS HEART  
IS BRAVE...

THEY CAME WITHIN SIGHT OF LOSELLE. ALL SEEMED QUIET  
... BUT LOUIS VERDAN SENSED TROUBLE

STRANGE  
THERE IS SO  
LITTLE ACTIVITY  
NEAR THE VILLAGE.  
NOT A SIGN OF  
THE BOCHE...



THE FRENCHMAN'S SUSPICIONS WERE TO PROVE ONLY TOO REAL


WAIT UNTIL THE DOGS  
CLOSE THE RANGE...  
I WILL GIVE THE ORDER  
TO FIRE!






THAT FIRST TERRIBLE FUSILLADE SCYTHED INTO BRITISH PLATOON AND MAQUIS ALIKE.

JERRY AMBUSH!  
AAAGH!



PRIVATE HORROX KNEW HIS SECRET NIGHTMARE HAD COME TRUE . . . SERGEANT KELLY'S LUCK HAD RUN OUT AT LAST. IN THAT MOMENT, HE FOUND SOME DEEP WELL OF COURAGE WITHIN HIMSELF, HITHERTO UNTAPPED.

THEY'RE FIRING  
FROM THAT OLD CONCRETE  
STRONGPOINT! UNLESS WE  
CAN BLAST THEM OUT  
WE'LL ALL BE  
KILLED!



WHAT IS IT THAT THRUSTS MEN INTO ACTION WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST . . . OR BREAKS A SPELL OF HESITATION AND TURNS THEM SUDDENLY . . . INTO HEROES?



FROM THE DITCH WHERE HORROX HAD DRAGGED HIM, SERGEANT KELLY WATCHED IN AMAZEMENT AS THE YOUNG PRIVATE FLUNG HIMSELF INTO THE TEETH OF THE MERCILESS GUNS.





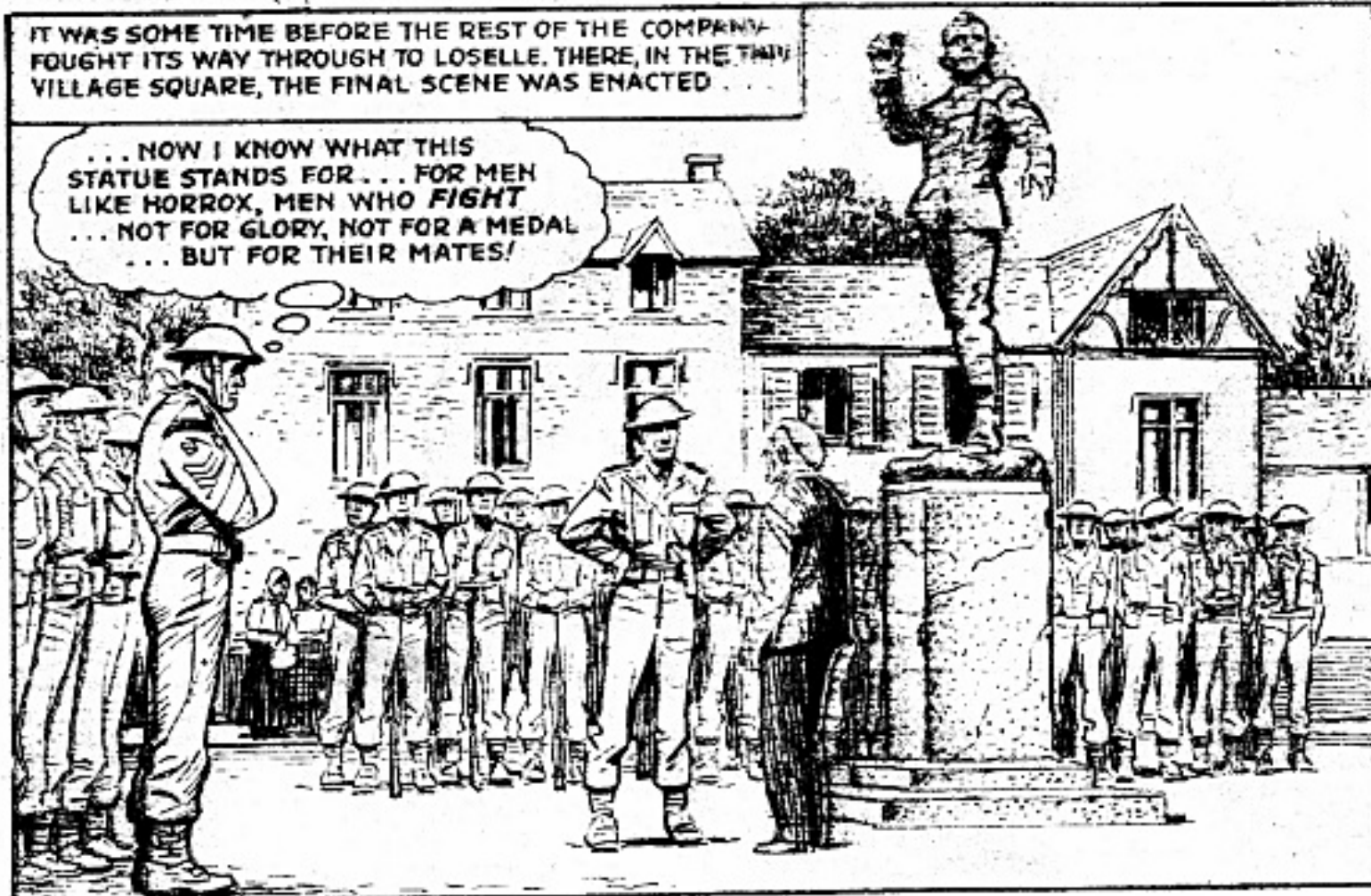
THE ENEMY POST WAS RIVEN BY THE EXPLODING GRENADE BUT THEIR GUNS HAD EXACTED A PRICE FOR SILENCE . . .

HORROX DID IT!  
HE SMASHED THEM . . .  
AND . . . AND I CALLED  
HIM A COWARD . . .



IT WAS SOME TIME BEFORE THE REST OF THE COMPANY FOUGHT ITS WAY THROUGH TO LOSELLE. THERE, IN THE TOWN VILLAGE SQUARE, THE FINAL SCENE WAS ENACTED . . .

... NOW I KNOW WHAT THIS  
STATUE STANDS FOR . . . FOR MEN  
LIKE HORROX, MEN WHO *FIGHT*  
... NOT FOR GLORY, NOT FOR A MEDAL  
... BUT FOR THEIR MATES!



THE PLATOON LED THE MARCH AWAY FROM THAT LIBERATED VILLAGE AND AT ITS HEAD WAS A MAN WHO HAD FOUND THE TRUTH AT LAST.



MY OLD MAN  
WAS AFRAID OF BEING  
KNOWN AS ONE OF A COMPANY  
OF COWARDS, SO HE HID BEHIND  
A PHONEY MEDAL. BUT BEHIND  
THAT STATUE TO THE UNKNOWN  
SOLDIER STAND A MILLION OF  
US... ORDINARY SOLDIERS  
JUST LIKE HORROX...  
AND ME, MAYBE...



**ALSO ON SALE NOW**

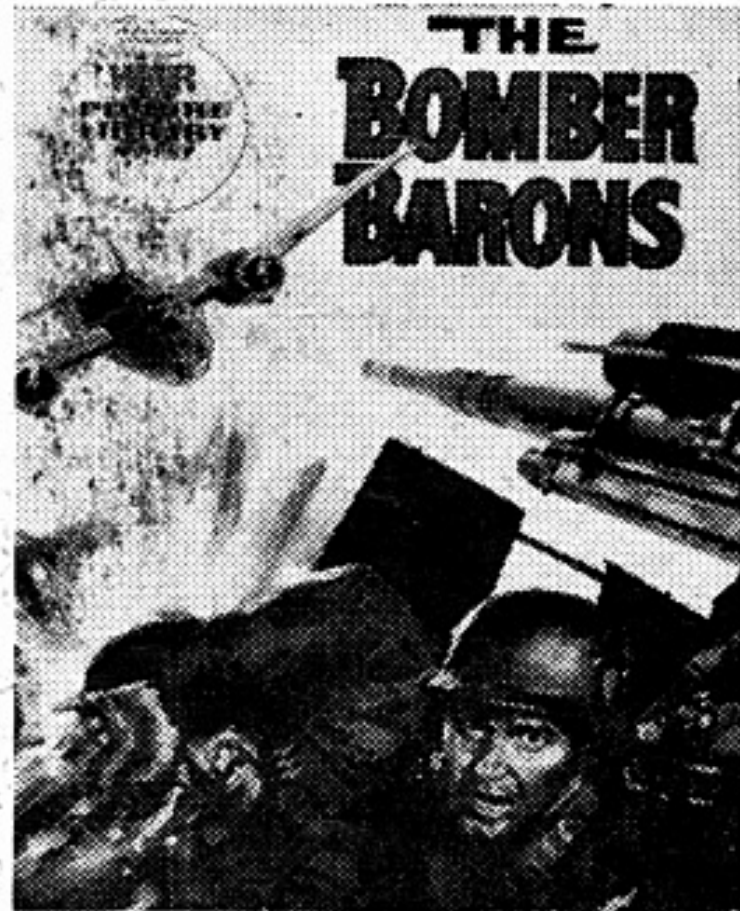
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